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The Dynamic of Performing Social Relations amongst Managers and Supervisors: A Thematic Analysis

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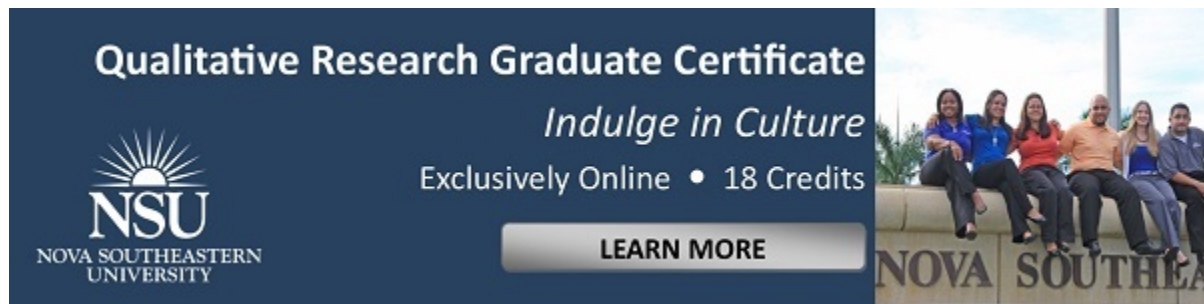


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Abstract

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Keywords

Thematic Analysis, Managerial, Qualitative, Social Relationship, Supervisory

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The Dynamic of Performing Social Relations amongst Managers and Supervisors: A Thematic Analysis

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This study investigated the factors, dimensions, and dynamic flow of the manager-supervisor social relationship in a company with family values. This research was a qualitative study with a thematic analysis approach based on the six-step thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). The authors used open-ended questionnaires and interviews as data gathering tools. This study found that the three factors that influence four interrelated dimensions can result in group cohesiveness, target achievement, and performance improvement. The results of this study can be used in policy-making by considering the social relationship between employees as a supporting factor in achieving organizational goals. The manager-supervisor social relation in Indonesia is unique as it is different from those found in other countries. Companies with similar characteristics can use the results from this research as a reference. Keywords: Thematic Analysis, Managerial, Qualitative, Social Relationship, Supervisory

Introduction

All companies have to think of how to address the intense and fierce competition within the industrial globalization today. All organizations, either in the public or private sector, have to find specific competitive advantages that are not shared with other organizations to win business competitions. Among competitive advantages that are important to organizations are the organizational condition and characteristics because they can influence the continuous change process in the organization. While some organizations more readily accept changes, some are unwilling to change. The difference in the acceptance of change between organizations is due to different organizational cultures (Furnham, 2005).

Organizational culture is not independent of the national culture. Let us take Indonesia as an example. Indonesia has a collectivism index score (IDV) of 14 (1-100) which indicates that Indonesian people tend to be more collectivist than individualist (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). According to Gundlach, Zivnuska, and Stoner (2006), a collectivist culture has a specific characteristic of prioritizing group interests over individual interests. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) stated that another characteristic of collectivist culture is family values. From these descriptions, we can conclude that collectivist culture as a social order has a stronger emotional bond between individuals than in an individualist culture.

Collectivist culture in the organization is indicated by how the employees react to changes (Kolodziej-Smith, Friesen, & Yaprak, 2013). Employees in collectivist organizational cultures tend to prefer the old ways, do not want to change, are less responsive, and are reluctant to compete (Smith, et al. 2014). Consequently, if such attitudes persist, it would be very likely that sooner or later the employees in collectivist organizational cultures will show inappropriate work behaviors such as frequent absence from work, decreased productivity, and decreased satisfaction. There is a company that manages the temple in Indonesia that is one of the companies that adopts collectivist culture as evident in the family values embedded in the relationships between employees. According to Deal and Kennedy (1982), family values in the company can strengthen the company's system, increase compromise, minimize conflict, and create a harmonious atmosphere within the company. On the other hand, in collectivist cultures, there are likes and dislikes between employees that lead the individuals in the organization to seek personal benefits by using various methods to establish good social relationships with the superiors (Zhang, Deng, & Wang, 2014). Based on the abovementioned reasons, this paper shed light on the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that influence the manager-supervisor social relationship in a company with family values?
2. What are the dimensions that make up the manager-supervisor social relationship in a company with family values?
3. What are the dynamics of the dimensions that make up the manager-supervisor relationship in a company with family values?

Literature Review

Family Values in Collectivist Society

In cultural theory, Rokeach (1973) divides collectivism into two based on the individual group members' view of each other which is vertical collectivism (different self) and horizontal collectivism, which is based on the individual members' view of each other horizontally (same self; Earley & Erez, 1997). Based on Lee and Choi's (2005) factorial analysis, the individuals in the vertical form of collectivist culture have a sense of integrity in the group, competitiveness as a group to be better than other groups, and are willing to sacrifice personal goals to achieve group goals. Other characteristics possessed by the individuals in vertical collectivist societies are the capability to realize their roles within the group and the inherent differences between group members. As for the horizontal form of a collectivist culture, there is an equality between members in that the individuals tend to see each other as perceiving the same goals, being interdependent to each other, and showing shared-disobedience to the authority.

In a collectivist society, family culture can dominate an organization because the communal culture of the individuals within the organization systematically shapes the organizational culture (Paisner, 1999). In a field study by Casey (1999), it was shown that the social relationship in an organizational environment that emphasizes family values will create a family-like relationship rather than a collegial relationship because the leaders are seen as family members rather than administrators or bosses.

On the one hand, family value is defined as a value that influences each member in an organization to act as a member of a family. On the other hand, Obiekwe (2018) defines organizational family culture (OFC) as the values, norms, mindset, shared beliefs, and attitude involving a group of people in an organization who see and relate to one another as a family. A survey with 276 managers and professionals in the research of Thompson, Beauvais,

and Lyness (1999) showed that family value served as a step that organization took to support the integrated work values as well as family life.

Still, in this case, Fiske (1992) divides human interaction into four relationship models: (a) communal sharing, relationships that maintain quality in groups; (b) authority ranking, related to social status or power position held; (c) equality matching that refers to equality or peer relations; and (d) market pricing that emphasizes individuals who interact with each other based on the benefits provided from the relationship. In family culture, communal sharing is a form of interrelated social relations. In this regard, Triandis (1995) examines a form of collectivist culture that normatively and socially proves to be interdependence between people who have close relations. In the communal sharing model, each individual is willing to share knowledge because he/she considers the relationship as a means to get a common goal (Boer, Baalen, & Kumar, 2002). However, according to Fiske (1992), in general, individuals will combine some relations models in the form of behavior to understand other individuals at different times, assess certain social behaviors, and anticipate the impact of other individual behaviors to coordinate with other individuals. These relationship models are usually interconnected and an individual may use a combination of two models or more depending on his/her position when dealing with others, for example with colleagues or superiors (Fiske, 1992).

Family Values in Superior-Subordinate Relation

Tjiu and Purwanto (2018) in their study with 150 respondents including supervisors and managers sought to see the influence of Confucianism and organizational climate on leader-member exchange (LMX) and found that Guanxi is the most respected value in organizations with family values. In social relationships, family culture teaches us that as human beings we need to help each other because humans cannot live on their own. Besides, the study by Alakavuklar in 2009 examined family values as a method to make the employees attached to organizations which, in turn, minimize conflict and disagreement within the organization (Alakavuklar, 2009). Another scholar, Obiekwe (2018), revealed the important role of family culture in the organization including the creation of a positive and productive environment in which each employee is respected by others. Organizational family culture helps create beneficial social interactions in the workplace. Employees consider others in the organization as close as friends and that will develop a sense of security as if in the family, which, in turn, leads to improved performance and fulfillment of organizational goals.

Organizations with family values can create friendships between superiors and subordinates both inside and outside the workplace (Cheung, Wu, Chan, & Wong, 2009). Social relations between managers and supervisors contain emotional ties and are considered as social morality as indicated by a manager who is willing and able to show personal care for his subordinates, for example (Tjiu & Purwanto, 2018). The existence of mutual morality becomes important in the family values of a superior-subordinate relationship (Tsang, 1998). For example, in a study conducted by Warren, Dunfee, and Li (2004) which included 203 surveys in the first study sample and 195 in the second study sample, the effects of Guanxi in various ethnic groups in China were examined. Warren et al. (2004) also revealed that the family values in the social relationship between superiors and subordinates resemble a double-edged sword. On the one side, they found a mutual relationship between superiors and subordinates which is one of the benefits that can be obtained from the relationship (Warren et al., 2004). Besides, a qualitative study conducted by Zhang, Deng, and Wang (2014) by interviewing 60 employees found likes and dislikes that lead the employees to think about maintaining social relationships that benefit them and well-established social relations will likely reduce work stress levels. On the other side, it could be harmful to the company. A study

conducted by Warren, Dunfee, and Li (2004) found that social relations between superiors and subordinates will form a network and the resulting network may benefit certain groups. According to Lin and Huang (2013), Guanxi which leads to negative relationships involving bribing, lobbying, and vested interest to achieve certain goals can undermine organizational effectiveness which, in turn, endangers the organization.

The Role of Researchers

The four researchers are all Indonesian and immersed in the culture, race, and language. From that perspective, all researchers were interested in performing research that pointed out culture as a special consideration in research practice in the social, organizational context.

The first writer is Tri Astuti. She is an Industrial and Organizational Psychologist. Her main interest is the uniqueness of Indonesia's cultural diversity. The results obtained were also according to the distinctive culture within the organization. The first author is also the core interviewer in the data retrieval process.

The second writer is Avin Fadilla Helmi. She is a doctorate professor who has an interest in researching social relationship in the organization. She is the supervisor or promoter. She has completed several studies related to social relations at various levels in the organization.

The third writer is Aniq Hudiyah Bil Haq, who is interested in qualitative research. She gave many bits of help in the data coding process.

The fourth writer is Mohamad Dzigie Aulia Al Farauqi who is responsible in the cohesion and coherence as well as the grammar of this paper.

Method

Research Design

The research method the authors used to understand the context of superior-subordinate relations at the Manager-Supervisor level was qualitative in nature. Moleong (2004) defines qualitative research as research that intends to understand a phenomenon experienced by research subjects such as behaviors, perceptions, motivations, and actions as a whole in a certain natural context by utilizing various natural methods the results of which are presented in the form of description which is based on the words of the respondents. The authors used the thematic analysis in analyzing the data. According to Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes found in a phenomenon.

Ethics and Participants

Before the data collection process, the authors had carried out several things, including seeking a research approval letter because without such a letter any research cannot be carried out and prepared informed consent forms to be signed by the participants who agreed to participate in this study.

Before hand, the authors had set the selection criteria of participants which included the following: (a) being employees in managerial and supervisory positions and (b) having worked in the company for more than one year. The researcher asked for help from the Human Resources Department for a list of employees who fit the study's criteria, then they directly approached the suggested participants to explain the details of the study, including the purpose of the study and the ethical considerations to keep them safe under the procedures applied. Once they expressed their agreement to participate in the study, the authors asked them to sign

the informed consent form to formalize their consent to be involved in the study. Around 30 employees signed the informed consent forms. All participants of this study were permanent employees who had been working for more than one year and assume supervisory or managerial positions at a company with family values. The ages of the employees selected to be interviewed in this study ranged between 30 and 50 years. Of the 10 managers and supervisors interviewed, only one person was female.

The authors also offered to counsel in case the participants experienced negative emotions or feelings during the research process. According to Biros (2018), it is important to base research on ethics regardless of its specific purpose for the growth and development of science. However, no participants asked for counseling during the research process.

Data Collection Tools

The authors used open-ended questionnaires as the first step in collecting data from all participants. According to Visser, Krosnick, Lavrakas, and Kim (2014), a survey is a convenient and practical way to collect data with a wider distribution. The results of the open questionnaire were meant to identify the factors and dimensions that make up the manager-supervisor social relationship in the company being studied. The items in the questionnaire included name, position, department, years of service, employee status, date of birth, race/ethnicity, and gender. Personal data such as years of service, position, and department were used to determine the pairs of respondents (manager and supervisor) to be interviewed. The sample questions included “Could you please tell me in detail about your relationship with your superior,” “Could you please explain the positive and negative experiences you had when establishing a relationship with your superior (or subordinate)?” The participants were also asked to give the fundamental reasons for establishing social relations between managers and supervisors and the process of doing so. They were then asked to give examples of things that can support the establishment of social relations between superiors or subordinates.

The authors carried out in-depth interviews once they had completed the survey data collection process. The main purpose of this interview was to find out the dynamics of the manager-supervisor social relations in the company being studied. Not all respondents who signed the informed consent and the open questionnaires were willing to be interviewed due to their busy schedules. Among the 30 respondents who completed the open questionnaires, only 10 supervisors and managers agreed to be interviewed. The authors took the necessary measures to ensure the participants’ readiness for the interviews by making appointments with them by phone. It took 2 months in total to interview 10 managers and supervisors two times or more for about one and a half hour each to get as complete data as possible. Both the authors and the respondents used Bahasa Indonesia during the entire interviews. The interview questions included asking the participants to tell in detail about positive and negative things they experienced in establishing social relations with their superiors/subordinates, the factors they think as underlying how managers and supervisors establish social relations, other related factors that influence their relationships, and how they affect the dynamics of these factors and dimensions as a whole.

Data Credibility

Validity in qualitative research is based on the certainty of research result accuracy from the viewpoint of the researchers, the participants, or the readers in general (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the authors assessed the qualitative research validity with triangulations, including method triangulation, investigator triangulation, and data triangulation. The authors carried out the triangulations by examining the credential levels of the research results based

on the data gathered with several data collection techniques, including interviews, surveys, and observations (Moleong, 2004). The author took necessary measures to confirm the survey data during the interview phase. For example, the authors obtained a statement “the subordinates are given the freedom of creation” from the survey. During the interview, the authors asked the interviewed subordinates whether or not they are given the freedom to create things. Subsequently, the authors performed triangulation by examining the consistency between the data they obtained from the open questionnaires and the interviews. This is in line with Bungin (2011), who stated that the purpose of the triangulation method is to find out the consistency of data obtained with different methods. After obtaining data consistency from different collection methods, the authors tested the reliability level with investigator triangulation. Investigator triangulation, according to Patton (1999), is carried out by using more than one researcher, interviewer, observer, or data analyst in the same study. Investigator triangulation is crucial to minimize bias in collecting data and reporting data analysis results. The authors carried out the investigator triangulation by involving three researchers. Each of the three researchers performed certain data analysis the results of which were compared by the authors to determine the consistency. The authors discussed the data which did not coincide with each other until they reached an agreement. The authors referred to Denzin (2010) who asserted that data triangulation can be done by using different sources of data such as different times, different spaces, and different persons. The authors carried out data triangulation on the themes found through questionnaires and interviews and developed a flow chart of these themes. Afterward, they asked the respondents to examine the flow chart to check whether the dynamics flow is consistent with their experience.

Data Analysis

The authors used a thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations. A thematic analysis helps analyze data systematically. The first recommendation of Braun and Clarke says that the way to get familiar and understand a set of data is by reading them repeatedly and intensively. This repeated reading process helps the researcher complete what is missing from the data. According to them, repeated reading will help researchers get familiar with the data before heading to the next step, coding. In other words, researchers should start the coding phase only after they are familiar with the data from reading the data repeatedly.

In this study, the research team used the results from the analysis of the open-ended questionnaires to find out the factors and dimensions that make up the manager-supervisor social relationship. Each research team member encoded the initial raw data in the form of a table to make the coding process simpler. Each research team member was asked to make a list of codes and their definitions. Having produced various codes, the research team discussed the similarities and differences between the resulting codes and definitions. A code with the same definition became the agreed code, whereas a code with different definitions was discussed until an agreement between the team members was reached. Afterward, the research team tried to categorize the initially agreed for a larger theme. Some examples of the data analysis process can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Theme, Codes, & Frequency

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Personal	Individual characters	30
	Competence	14
	Motive	2
Interpersonal	Coordination	3
	Communication style	4
Organizational	Work assignments	9
	Company culture	2
Knowledge sharing	Information Sharing	10
	Receiving input	7
Understanding each other	Respect	3
	Understanding	3
Support	Giving Help	5
	Attention	5
	Guiding	4
Work autonomy	Freedom	4
	Involvement	2

Having obtained the factors and dimensions of the manager-supervisor social relation through the open-questionnaire data, the research team carried out interviews to see the dynamic flow of the factors and dimensions they had found. The research team continued following the thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). Since they had obtained data about the factors and the dimensions of the manager-supervisor social relation from the previous step, they directly put the data they obtained from the interviews regarding the factors and dimensions of the manager-supervisor social relation directly into the categories of factors and dimensions. The authors were more interested in seeing the process and linkages between the categories obtained. The data analysis in this phase was similar to questionnaire data analysis in that the research team categorized the sub-themes until finding the main themes and obtaining new themes such as tasks and responsibilities (see Table 2).

Table 2. Raw Data, Coding, Sub-Themes, & Themes

Raw Data	Coding	Sub-Themes	Themes
<i>“setiap saya masuk kelingkungan yang baru, saya selalu mencoba untuk memahami dunia mereka dahulu. Dan ketika saya sudah berhasil masuk kelingkaran sosial mereka. Seiring berjalannya waktu mereka akan memahami saya dan karakter saya juga”</i> (Every time I'm in a new environment, I always try to understand and get familiar with their world first... and once I have successfully entered their social circle, with time, they will understand me and my character.)	Adaptive character	Character and competence	Personal Factor

Setiap hari kita selalu komunikasi. Biasanya topik yang dibahas tentang perkembangan internal dan eksternal perusahaan kami”(Everyday we always have communication. The topic we usually discuss is either about internal development or external development in our company.)

The purpose of the internal meeting

Motive

“kepala divisititu yang kita cari adalah pengalamannya terus cara dia memberikan solusinya, mengarahkan kita .. Kita ini harus gimana”(We seek out head of division’s experience, then how he gives us solutions, leads us and tells us what we must and must not do.)

The desire to get direction

“Mereka mematuhi saya. Jika ada sesuatu yang dirasa salah, mereka selalu melaporkan kesaya”(They obey me. When there was something wrong they always report it to me.)

Report something if goes wrong

Coordination

“Semuanya, satu ruangan kita ajak keluar gitu lo. Apa yang akan direncanakan untuk diluar hari ini apa, kita ajak keluar.”(All people in the room are asked to go out to plantogether what we will do today.)

Meetings are not always in the office

Communication style

Interpersonal Factor

“Yo saya enggak bisa kerja apa-apa, karena mereka orang-orang yang mengerjakan pekerjaan saya dan mereka lebih langsung dengan anak buahnya yang di bawah gitu lo. Jadi kalau enggak ada mereka ya, kita satu team kita enggak bisa kerja gitu lo dan saya enggak mungkin melakukan pekerjaan sebanyak itu saya sendiri, karena saya harus ada mereka gitu lo”(Yeah, I can do nothing because they are the ones who do my task and have more direct access to their subordinates. Without them, our team will not be able to accomplish such a lot of work and I certainly cannot do it just by myself. They are simply indispensable.)

Dependency in completing tasks

Work assignments

Organizational Factor

“oh gini pak ngene-ngene. Oh yowis. Jadi initinya disini hubungannya sangat menurut saya sangat kekeluargaan sih mba.” (So, listen to me. What happened was precicely like this. Thepoint is that our relationships here is very intimate and family-like.)

Family values that affect social relationship

Company culture

“tapi kalau kita kedekatan inikan bisa curhat, bisa cerita dan sharing, berbagi pengalaman.” (But if we are close, we can confide, share stories, and share experiences.)

Sharing experience

of Knowledge sharing

Dimension

“Artinya kita tidak menutup kemungkinan untuk sharing. Kita sama-sama sharing artinya kalau ide itu mungkin kita munculkan itu, dari internal divisi hukum itu sudah satu suara” (This means we are open to sharing, including sharing ideas with each other. In the internal legal division, the shared ideas are then agreed upon.)

Sharing of idea

“Jadi kalau misalnya anakku sakit, gitu akukan harus gak bisa masuk gak bisa kerja, gitu yaudah saya Cuma izin pak saya kerjanya Cuma di rumah gitu” (So, when my child is sick for which I cannot go to work, I only need to ask for permission from him [the superior] to work at home.)

Understand family problems

Understanding each other

“tapi karena bawahan saya bukan orang teknik, jadi itu apaya, kadang-kadang aku jadi punya tantangan untuk menjelaskan ini lo pak. Dan menjelaskannya ke orang yang bukan teknik itu kan susah-susah gampang” (But because some of my subordinates have no technical knowledge, sometimes it is quite challenging for me to explain about technical stuff and you know how hard to do it to someone who is not familiar with that.)

Understand the competence of subordinate

Understanding each other

“Kami selalu mengerti satu sama lain jika karyawan muslim mengambil cuti untuk merayakan hari raya idul fitri dan karyawan kristen pergi bekerja dan sebaliknya” (Here we understand each other’s need, for example when the Muslim employees take holiday leave the Christian employees come to work, and vice versa.)

Respect each other’s religious holidays

“di perusahaan ini, setiap karyawan yang datang terlambat harus menghubungi kami, saya kuatir jika terjadi suatu hal pas di jalan” (In our company, any one who comes late should let us know to tell us that nothing bad happened on his/her way to work.)

Helping others

“Iya, sejak awal saya lebih dari tugas-tugasnya ya mampu dilaksanakan. Kalau mereka enggak mampu ya kita support gitu, kita support kita backup gitu.” (Yes, from the beginning our subordinates are informed that whenever they find difficulties in carrying out their duties, we will support them, we will back them up.)

Helping to completing task

Support

“pimpinan saya punya banyak pengalaman kenal dengan senior-senior disini jadi dia yang ngajarin saya” (My superior is quite experienced and familiar with the seniors in this company, so I consider him as my mentor.)

Learning by experience

“Karenakan udah bilang kalau, ya monggo kita kasih kebebasan saya kasih tanggung jawab untuk kreativitas, tapi apa-apa saya diceritain, saya diberitahu. Karena kalau saya tidak diberitahu, ya mohon maaf saya enggak tanggung jawab, karena kamu enggak mau cerita kesaya, enggak ngomong kesaya gitu lo” (Because I have already told you that...OK I give you freedom, I give you responsibility for creativity, but in return I expect you to keep me informed, otherwise ... well, I'm sorry, I will not take the responsibility if something goes wrong.)

Freedom to create

Work autonomy

“oh, selalu di bawa, jadi kita tahu progress nya, trus kita juga bisa menerangkan sedetil-detilnya ke pimpinan atas,” (Oh, it is always brought along, so that we are always informed about the progress and enabled to explain every detail to the top management.)

Reporting work progress

“padahal kami butuhnya beliau standby disini, biarkan kami bekerja .. kami .. jika ada yang perlu ditanyakan kami bertanya. jadi akhirnya gini kami memahami pekerjaan dan beliauapun harus memahami pekerjaan” (We only need them to be available for us..., let us do our jobs.....when there is something we do not understand, we will ask, so that we understand our tasks and they understand theirs.)

Managers and supervisors understand their respective duties and responsibilities

Responsible for the task Task & responsibility

“Ya, kita coba untuk lakukan, coba untuk komunikasi dengan bawahan itu supaya diberjalannya divisi ini tetap solid kan begitu. Karena tanpa kerjasama yang baikpun nanti kita akan kacau juga. Karena mereka paham akan pekerjaan mereka masing-masing gitu.” (Yes, we try to do it, we try to communicate with our subordinates so that the division will continue to be solid because without good cooperation things will be chaotic. They understand their respective jobs.)

Communication improves team solidarity

Solid team

Output

“yakansaya mengusulkan untuk ada perubahan apaya, personal pada orang yang saya pindahkan gitu. Operasional saya kurangi orangnya, dari pekerjaan misalnya 15 dikerjakan orang berempat, pekerjaan 15 jadi orang berdua, dikerjakan orang berdua. Awalnya memang mereka bilang tidak mampu. Pertama, jangan bilang tidak mampu dulu, lakukan dulu, terus maksimal. Nah,

Work system changes affect employee performance improvement

Employee performance improvement

sekarang ini mereka sudah tertata dengannya sendiri”

(I suggested some changes in the personnel, moving some people here, some people there. I reduce the operational person, for example a job that was previously done by 15 people becomes done by four, a job that was previously done by 15 people becomes done by two, for which the two people should work collaboratively. At first they said that they could not do it, but I said “First, don't say you can't do it, do it first and do it to the maximum.” Now, they have become quite well organized.)

The authors found that each participant gave rise to a category of tasks and responsibilities that are equally influenced by factors both on the part of the managers and the supervisors. Duties and responsibilities that appeared in the interview data did not appear in the questionnaire data. Likewise with the category of the superior-subordinate relationship outputs. Having identified categories from the themes obtained from questionnaires and interviews, the authors began to develop the flow of the process dynamics in each participant's answers from which they eventually found the same flow. Afterward, they asked the participants to examine the dynamics flow they had developed to check whether the plot is consistent with their experience.

The authors also made direct observations during the data collection process at the study site and recorded the observational data they obtained during the interview process by taking notes when they saw the managers talking and sharing jokes with the supervisors in the Javanese language, for example. A similar finding was also found in the interview data in which the respondents said that they used to trade jokes with each other. This observational data was important to make sure that the data they obtained from the open questionnaires and the interviews are reflected in the observational data. According to Yin (2018), using various sources of evidence can strengthen the findings.

Results

Two sets of findings were produced from this study. First, we identified factors that affect the relationship of manager and supervisor and the dimensions that form the dynamics at the manager and supervisory level. Second, we identified the dynamics of social relationships between manager and supervisor.

Manager and Supervisor Factors

Personal factors. Personal factors were found as the most influencing in the manager-supervisor social relationship establishment. These factors consisted of three components: individual characteristics, competencies, and motives. Adaptability and more flexible attitudes were found as individual characteristics that influence the establishment of manager-supervisor friendship, whereas competencies such as having broad insight, creativity, and responsiveness were found as factors that influence the manager-supervisor social relationship. This can be seen from the following respondent's statement:

setiap saya masuk ke lingkungan yang baru, saya selalu mencoba untuk memahami dunia mereka dahulu. Dan ketika saya sudah berhasil masuk ke lingkaran sosial mereka. Seiring berjalannya waktu mereka akan memahami saya dan karakter saya juga (Every time I'm in a new environment, I always try

to understand and get familiar their world first... and once I have successfully entered their social circle, with time, they will understand me and my character.)

In this study, the motive was meant as the motive to resolve work and personal or family problems. This is indicated by the following statement:

Setiap hari kita selalu komunikasi. Biasanya topik yang dibahas tentang perkembangan internal dan eksternal perusahaan kami (Every day we always have communication. The topic that we usually discuss is about the internal and external development of our company.)

Interpersonal factors. In addition to personal factors, the authors found two components of interpersonal factors: coordination and communication style. Here, coordination was more about communicating jobs, while communication style was more about the communication method used. It can be seen in the following respondent's statement:

Mereka mematuhi saya. Jika ada sesuatu yang dirasa salah, mereka selalu melaporkan kesaya (They obey me. When there was something wrong they always report it to me.)

Organizational factors. The third factor the authors found was organizational factors that have two components: work tasks and corporate culture. Work tasks that have been regulated in the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) require them to keep in touch with each other, and the interdependency on tasks and responsibilities makes them need each other. This is showed by the following respondent statement:

oh gini pak ngene-ngene. Oh yowis. Jadi initinya disini hubungannya sangat menurut saya sangat kekeluargaan sih mba. Yo saya enggak bisa kerja apa-apa, karena mereka orang-orang yang mengerjakan pekerjaan saya dan mereka lebih langsung dengan anak buahnya yang di bawah gitu lo. Jadi kalau enggak ada mereka ya, kita satu team kita enggak bisa kerja gitu lo dan saya enggak mungkin melakukan pekerjaan sebanyak itu saya sendiri, karena saya harus ada mereka gitu lo (Yeah I can do nothing because they are the ones who do my task and have more direct access to their subordinates. Without them, our team will not be able to complete such a lot of work and I certainly cannot do it just by myself. They are simply indispensable.)

Besides, strong family values lead to a more relaxed work climate where both the managers and the supervisors became more open and free to trade jokes with each other, as suggested in the following respondents' statements:

oh ginipakngene-ngene. Oh yowis. Jadi initinya disini hubungannya sangat menurut saya sangat kekeluargaan sih mba. (So, listen to me. What happened was precisely like this. The point is our relationships here are very intimate and family-like.)

Knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing refers to the exchange of information or knowledge between individuals. The term knowledge-sharing is more appropriate to be used in the work context because the exchange of knowledge is primarily aimed to help one another in the context of completing tasks. This can be seen when the managers share their work

experiences at the company with the supervisors to be used as lessons learned, as seen in the following respondent's statement:

tapi kalau kita kedekatan ini kan bisa curhat, bisa cerita dan sharing, berbagi pengalaman. (But for us, closeness allows us to confide, share stories and experiences.)

Communicating new ideas and the latest developments during manager-supervisor social relationships were very important to support the improvement of organizational performance. The ideas take-and-would likely bring their relationship closer.

Artinya kita tidak menutup kemungkinan untuk sharing. Kita sama-sama sharing artinya kalau ide itu mungkin kita munculkan itu, dari internal divisi hukum itu sudah satu suara (This means we are open to sharing, including sharing ideas with each other. In the internal legal division, the shared ideas are then agreed upon.)

Rather than sharing work matters only, the manager-supervisor relationship also allows them to share personal experiences and problems, for example when a supervisor has a problem in educating his child, as shown in the respondent's statement below:

"jadi saya juga nanya mendidik anak laki-laki tuh seperti apa?" (So I also ask some personal issues such as how to educate a son.)

Likewise, the managers expect that their subordinates tell them about the problems they are facing if any. This way, it is expected that those who are dealing with any difficulties can be helped and supported. This can be seen in the following respondent's statement

kalau di pekerjaan itu mereka ada kesulitan, mereka itu tidak sungkan, tidak pekewuh istilahnya untuk menyampaikan masalah, baik itu masalah yang ada di keluarganya ataupun masalah di pekerjaan (When they have difficulties with work, they will not hesitate and feel free to confide either their problems at home or at work.)

Mutual understanding. Mutual understanding is defined as an understanding of each other's conditions. Such a mutual understanding is enabled because both the managers and the supervisor have shared many things, including the problems being faced, either with work or personal matters. This is suggested in the following respondent's response:

Jadi kalo misalnya anakku sakit, gitu aku kan harus gak bisa masuk gak bisa kerja, gitu yaudah saya Cuma izin pak saya kerjanya cuma di rumah gitu (So, when my child is sick for which I cannot go to work, I only need to ask for permission from him [the superior] to do my job at home.)

A sense of mutual understanding can also arise due to lack of knowledge in certain field either on the part of managers or the subordinates, for example when the superiors need to explain the advantages and disadvantages of certain jobs that are not understood by their subordinates, or vice versa, as evident in the following statement:

tapi karena bawahan saya bukan orang teknik, jadi itu apaya, kadang-kadang aku jadi punya tantangan untuk menjelaskan ini lo pak. Dan menjelaskannya ke orang yang bukan teknik itu kan susah-susah gampang” (But because some of my subordinates have no technical knowledge, sometimes it is quite challenging for me to explain about technical stuff and you know how hard to do it to someone who is not familiar with that.)

Other things that should be understood by the managers include each of their subordinates' characters and competencies. This serves to make the established communication remain smooth. Besides, the managers need to explain to their subordinates the importance of knowing the needs of others such as the need to take leave during religious holiday in turn according to their respective religions. This is evident in the following respondent's statement:

Kami selalu mengerti satu sama lain jika karyawan muslim mengambil cuti untuk merayakan hari raya idul fitri dan karyawan kristen pergi bekerja dan sebaliknya (We understand each other's need, for example when the Muslim employees take holiday leave the Christian employees come to work and vice versa).

Support. Support is defined as a form of encouragement to help meet other's needs. Managers need to pay attention to what skills their subordinates (the supervisors) need to improve and send them to attend training suitable to their needs to support them. Such support was confirmed by the list of training to be attended the supervisors showed to researchers. This is shown by the following manager's statement:

Saya sering menghadiri beberapa pelatihan dan saya selalu membagikan apa yang saya dapatkan kepada bawahan saya. (I have often attended various coaching and training and I always share what I've got with my subordinates.)

Another concern shown by the managers to their subordinates is their constant communication with them using social media to make sure that they are kept informed about the whereabouts of their subordinates, especially when they were absent. This is evident in the following statement:

di perusahaan ini, setiap karyawan yang datang terlambat harus menghubungi kami, saya khawatir jika terjadi suatu hal pas dijalan (In our company, any one who comes late should let us know to tell us that nothing bad happened on his/her way to work.)

The managers need to understand their subordinates' duties and responsibilities to provide the appropriate help they need when they face difficulties in carrying out them. For example,

Iya, sejak awal saya lebih dari tugas-tugasnya ya mampu dilaksanakan. Kalau mereka enggak mampu ya kita support gitu, kita support kita backup gitu. (Yes, from the beginning our subordinates are informed that whenever they find difficulties in carrying out their duties, we will support them, we will back them up.)

Another form of support provided by the managers to the supervisors was when the managers backup the supervisors in dealing with problems involving a third party. This is shown by the following supervisor's statement:

Saya selalu lapordulu keatasan saya ketika ada kesalahpahaman antar divisi. Atasan saya harus tahu dan mengerti dan pada akhirnya ikut membantu saya dalam menyelesaikan permasalahan” (I always immediately report to my superior when there was misunderstanding between divisionsbecause my superior should be informedand understand the problem to help me solve my problem.

The managers' advanced experiencescan serve as lessonslearned for their superordinates and the managers willingly guide their subordinates. This is shown by the following statement:

pimpinan saya punya banyak pengalaman kenal dengan senior-senior disini jadi dia yang ngajarin saya” (My superior is quite experienced and familiar with the seniors in this company, so I consider him as my mentor.)

Work autonomy. Work autonomy is defined as the freedom granted to someone to meet his/her job responsibilities. The freedom,from planning to carrying out a job, is given by the managers to the supervisors, but the granted freedom is not without limits for which the supervisor should understandthe dos and don'ts. This is shown by the following respondent's statement:

Karena kan udah bilang kalau, ya monggo kita kasih kebebasan saya kasih tanggung jawab untuk kreativitas, tapi apa-apa saya diceritain, saya diberitahu. Karena kalau saya tidak diberitahu, ya mohon maaf saya enggak tanggung jawab, karena kamu enggak mau cerita kesaya, enggak ngomong kesaya gitu lo (Because I have already told you that...OK I give you freedom, I give you responsibility for creativity, but in return I expect you to keep me informed, otherwise ... well, I'm sorry, I will not take the responsibility if something goes wrong.)

Aside from givingthe freedom of carrying out their duties and responsibilities and offering novel ideas, the managers also involve the supervisors in preparing a work progress report to the director. The following was the respondent's statement:

oh, selalu dibawa, jadi kita tahu progress nya, trus kita juga bisa menerangkan seditil-detilnya ke pimpinan atas (Oh, it is always brought along, so that we are always informed about the progress and enabled to explain everydetailto the top management)

The Psychological Dynamics of Manager-Supervisor Social Relationship

Based on the data analysis results it was found that both the managers and the supervisors have three factors that influence the relationship between them, including personal, interpersonal, and organizational factors. These factors affect both the managers and the supervisors' tasks and responsibilities (see Figure 1).

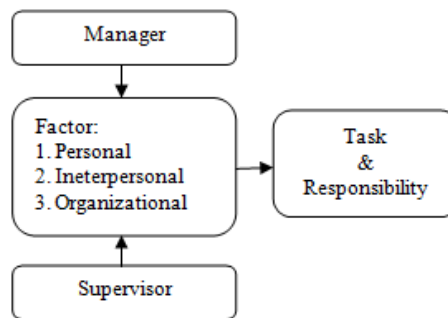


Figure 1. The Factors in the Manager–Supervisor Social Relationship

In terms of personal factors, the manager-supervisor social relationship is influenced by individual characteristics. Besides, another factor that underlies their relationship is the shared motive to solve problems (see Figure 2).

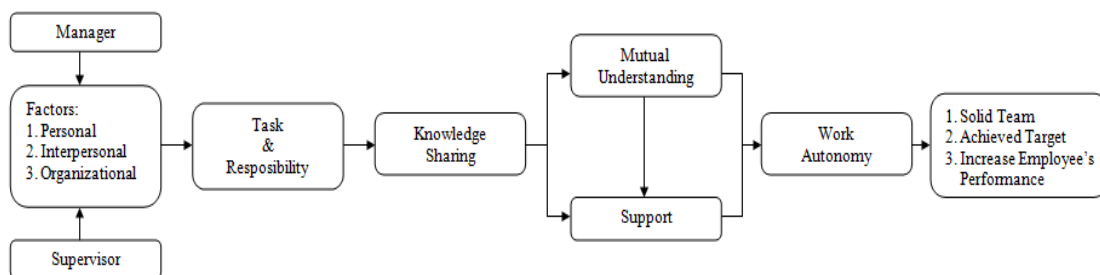


Figure 2. The Dynamics of the Manager-Supervisor Relationship
(Source: Present study's analysis results)

This study revealed that the manager-supervisor relationship starts with shared tasks and responsibilities that must be completed by the managers and the supervisors for which they had to find solutions to the problems they face during the process. It raises a sense of mutual need in that the managers need the supervisors to help achieve targets while the supervisors need the managers to help with their difficulties, provide direction, and use the managers' experience as lessons learned. The method they use is knowledge sharing, in which both the managers and the supervisors share knowledge and experience related both to work and personal problems. Knowledge sharing enables them to understand each other's conditions, including their problems so that which they can offer supports to complete their duties. Knowledge sharing also includes the reporting work progress by the supervisors to the managers so that when there is a misunderstanding with a third party such as the head of the unit, the corresponding manager will immediately help clarify the problem.

When misunderstanding occurs, the manager will try to help solve it by making the problem clear for both parties. The way the managers provide support to the supervisors are like the way people provide supports to others to deal with day to day problems and crises in their life. The managers' understanding of the skills the supervisors possess enables them to assign duties and responsibilities according to their respective expertise. The managers give the freedom to carry out duties and responsibilities to the supervisors as long as they constantly report to them about job-related activities they perform so that the managers are kept informed and will be responsible when something goes wrong.

Discussion

It is undeniable that one of the factors that can influence an employee's work behavior is the organizational culture. The company that manages temples in Indonesia is one example of companies that are influenced by the Indonesian culture's characteristics which tend to be collectivist (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Family values in an organization can benefit the organization. Alakavuklar (2009) states that the family metaphor in business is used by organizations to create morality, motivations, and positive organizational climate by which the employees will emotionally attach themselves to the organization, and create a strong sense of belonging that minimizes conflicts and disagreements within the organization.

The relationships between employees do not look like the relationships between coworkers. Instead, they look more like the relationships between relatives in which the boss can act like a father (or mother), while the employees are likely more committed when they see the organization as a family (Casey, 1999).

The established manager-supervisor social relationships remain bound by respect for one another. This is inline with Werbel and Henriques (2009) and Farr-Wharton, Brunetto, and Shacklock (2011) who suggest that there are mutual support, respect, and trust in the social relations between superiors and subordinates.

Trust that is indicated by giving freedoms in carrying out work duties and responsibilities is an important building block of interpersonal relationships (Brower, Schoorman & Tan 2000; Werbel & Henriques, 2009) and it is influenced by several important factors, which include interpersonal, personal, and organizational factors. Relational factors include the resulting interdependent relationship between superiors and subordinates (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). The sense of interdependence both on the parts of the managers and the supervisors in this study does not necessarily mean that both have the same motives in solving problems. For the managers, for example, the support they provide to the supervisors can be seen from their ability to overcome misunderstandings between supervisors and employees in other divisions. As for the supervisors, they show their support to the managers by carrying out their duties and responsibilities the best they can so that their division's work will receive the best review.

The manager-supervisor social relationships resemble social friendships that are far more relaxed even in a formal setting. This result is not much different from that of previous studies conducted in other countries such as China (Han, Zheng, & Zhu, 2012; Smith et al., 2014), Japan (Cheung, Wu, & Wong, 2013) and Saudi Arabia (Smith, et al., 2014).

This is like what is known as Guanxi, which means an informal relationship between staff and their direct superior, in Chinese society. Such a relationship can be established based on some potential benefits and shared interests. The individuals in such a relationship prioritize each other's interests and are psychologically bound to each other in following the rules (Han, Zheng, & Zhu, 2012; Smith et al., 2014). Japanese culture has Kankei (Cheung, Wu, & Wong, 2013). It is defined as the informal relationship between superiors and subordinates who have emotional bonds and focuses on balancing interpersonal and social cohesiveness (Cheung, Wu, & Wong, 2013). Arab society has Wasta, which is understood as a process in which individuals can achieve their goals through the relationships between key persons with high status (Smith et al., 2014).

This study found that the manager-supervisor relationships are seen as the strong reason the organization creates a work environment that can increase organizational productivity. This is in line with Breukelen, Schyns, and Blanc (2006) who stated that the social relations between superiors and subordinates can contribute.

This study also found that the outputs generated from the manager-supervisor relationship is directed beyond routine daily tasks, towards ideas that can be developed. Hadjisolomou (2015) emphasized that the results of the relationship between managers and supervisors are more inclined to delegate company policies and procedures with a wide scope, in order to ensure compliance with the implementation of company policies, which is in accord with Tansel and Gazioglu (2010) who revealed that within the manager-supervisor relationship there is more communication about the company's policies, goals, and work plans.

Various factors can affect the relationship between managers and supervisors, including personal factors such as the goal to solve problems. Johnson and Johnson (2005) explained that social relations are formed because of the goals to be achieved. Besides, some researchers explained the relationship between superiors and subordinates can be seen from various existing motifs. Homans (1961) explained that new social exchanges will occur when the goals of both parties are achieved.

The problems do not only relate to work, but include problems outside work such as personal or family problems. A rather closer examination revealed that non-work problems will not have an impact on the achievement of company targets, but it may support the quality of relations between superiors and subordinates. West and Turner (2010) explained that personal interests are not always considered bad and can be used to improve the quality of relationships.

This study also found that the personal factor that most significantly affects the manager-supervisor relationship is individual characteristics. This finding is in contrast to that of Fitri (2016) that the factor that most significantly affects the relationship between superiors and subordinates is interpersonal factors. These different findings can be because the companies or individuals have different motives in choosing and applying a particular relationship model in different cultures and situations (Fiske, 1992).

The organizational culture will ultimately affect all dimensions of the manager-supervisor social relationship. It is undeniable the organizational culture can influence employee work behavior (Langenhove, 2004; Luthans, 2006; Robbins & Judge, 2013). The organizational culture will ultimately affect all dimensions of the manager-supervisor social relationship. It is undeniable that organizational culture can influence employee work behavior (Burke & Litwin, 1992).

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